

CHRISTIAN BAPTISM.

BY B. F. MOOMAW.

"I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that you walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, with all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love; endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all."—Eph. 4: 1-6.

WITH a proper consideration of this subject, so as to arrive at an intelligent understanding of the idea that the apostle intended to convey, it will be seen that a unity of faith, a unity of practice, a unity of affection, and a unity of the body, or church, was the object before his mind, and that, to accomplish this, it would be necessary that they should all be brought under the influence of one Spirit, or one disposition of mind (the disposition that characterized the Son of God). "Then said I, Lo, I come, in the volume of the book it is written of me, to do thy will, O God."

That one faith embraced the triune God, the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost, one in three and three in one, one God in three persons, a unity in trinity, and a trinity in unity. For there are three that bear record in heaven—the Father, the Word and the Holy Ghost, and these three are one. 1 John 5: 7. And so also is there but one ordinance of baptism, by which they are all introduced into the one body or church. "For by one Spirit ye are all baptized into one body." 1 Cor. 12: 12, 13, 20; Eph. 2: 16; 5:

30; Rom. 12: 4, 5; 1 Cor. 10: 17; Col. 3: 15. It is clear that the apostle had before his mind, in this text, the one ordinance of baptism, and not the action in the performance of the ordinance. The epistle was written A. D. 64, consequently there had not, at that time, been any departure from the former practice, as instituted by the Master, and therefore no necessity of teaching on that point. According to the history of the church, we have no account of any departure from the apostolic pattern, until about the year 252 or 253, when Novatian was baptized by St. Cyprian, by affusion, because of his being sick, supposing that a compend of the ordinance would be better than no administration at all. But, recovering from his illness, he became a candidate for the See of Rome, and failed because of the invalidity of his baptism. And as to the single immersion of the Eunomians, we find no mention even of its existence among the Christians of the second and third centuries. It first appears among the bitter foes of Christ's Divinity, and was first introduced in conjunction with a change in the form of words, as given in the commission, about the year 375. It certainly can claim no distinct mention in the period between the death of St. John and the Eunomian heresy.

In the historical accounts of the introduction of the different forms of baptism, they are represented as departures from the primitive practice ("Modes of Baptism," page 78, by James Chrystal), and as we have no account of the introduction of trine immersion this side of the apostles, it follows, as a logical sequence, that it is the one baptism in the text, and that Paul was not discussing the action in the performance of the ordinance.

Having decided this question, we next inquire for a Scriptural subject for baptism. In the apostolic commis-

sion, the Master says, "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations," etc. Matt. 28: 19. It is necessary, therefore, that the mind be sufficiently developed so as to be capable of being taught, and this will exclude infants. This is confirmed by the apostle in his epistle to the Hebrews, 5: 12. "For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God." In the commission by St. Mark, 16: 15, 16, we have this language, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." Thus we see that faith necessarily precedes baptism, and infants being incapable of faith are not proper subjects for baptism, or other ordinances of the church, but dying in infancy they are saved by virtue of the atonement, by the blood of Jesus Christ, without other conditions, as indicated by the Savior, Mark 10: 14, saying, "Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of God." The Scriptures do not teach that they were baptized, nor have we any authority in Divine Revelation, either by precept or example, for baptizing infants. It is a relic of Popery, and claimed only by Catholics upon the authority of tradition. It can only be supported by speculative theology, such as supposing that the household baptisms, spoken of, necessarily included infants. This is not the fact, because it only requires a little observation to prove that there are many households where there are no infants; and that in the household baptisms, spoken of in the Scriptures, the facts, when clearly presented, show conclusively that the idea of infants is excluded.

Take the case of Lydia, for instance, a native of Thyatira, a city in Asia, at this time residing at Philippi, in Europe, probably a distance of three hundred miles from home,

engaged in selling goods. Her household is spoken of as being baptized, but it is not stated of whom her household consisted, whether a husband and children, or whether only assistants in the prosecution of her business. The latter is most probable, because it is not reasonable that, if she should have had a husband, she would have left him at home, or that, should she have had little children, she would have taken them with her into a distant country, engaged, as she was, in business enterprises. So, also, in the case of the jailer. We learn that when he was made sensible of his situation, and that these truly were "the servants of God," he fell down trembling before Paul and Silas, and brought them out of the inner prison, into his family residence. There, in response to his question, they spake the Word of the Lord unto him, and to all that were in his house," all, doubtless, capable of being taught. He took them the same hour of the night, "and washed their stripes and was baptized, he and all his, straightway." "And when he had *brought them into his house*, he set meat before them and rejoiced, *believing in God with all his house*." Acts 16: 29-34. They, all believing, were baptized upon their faith; in all cases faith being an essential qualification. Let this suffice as to the baptism of households.

Next we notice the argument adduced from the supposed identity of the two covenants, the Abrahamic and the Christian. While we admit that there is a similarity, we cannot agree that they are identical. When God called Abraham, he gave him *two promises* of an essentially different import and character. The first has respect to Abraham and his natural descendants, according to the flesh; the latter to the Messiah and all his people. The first is, that he will make of Abraham a great nation, in his own family, to be placed under a peculiar Providence. This is personal

and temporal. The second is spiritual and eternal. In thee or in thy seed shall all the families, the kindred, the nations, be blessed. In the first, God covenanted to give to him and to his seed the land of Canaan for an everlasting possession, and gave him the seal of circumcision as a guarantee for the fulfillment of this covenant, "to be kept, saith God, as a token betwixt me and you, and thou shalt keep my covenant, therefore, thou and thy seed after thee in their generations." "Every man child shall be circumcised, and it shall be a token of the covenant betwixt me and you." See Genesis 15th, 16th and 17th chapters. This being a national covenant, by which the inheritance of the land of Canaan was guaranteed to the lineal descendants of Abraham, the male members only need to be included; the female, naturally enjoying it with them, needed no sign of the covenant.

In this respect the second promise differs, being spiritual and universal, in which all are individually interested and responsible, "all families of the earth," male and female. This promise was confirmed by an oath, and because He could swear by no greater, He sware by himself. Gen. 22: 16. The promised seed, which is Christ, having come into the world, all power in heaven and in earth is given to Him. He establishes his kingdom with citizenship, conditioned upon obedience to the first principles of the doctrine of Christ,—faith, repentance and baptism, as enunciated by the Apostle Paul. See Heb. 6: 1, 2. Baptism differed from circumcision in its objects, operations and effects, circumcision being the seal to a national covenant, guaranteeing the right of possession to a single family and of limited territory, the males only recognized in the covenant; while baptism is an ordinance by which each individual, male and female, is incorporated into the divine family,

and intended for the entire human family, and a guarantee to the right of inheritance with the saints in light, if obeyed from the heart. Rom. 6: 17.

So, in the examination of this question, we conclude that the evidence and arguments for infant baptism are by far too meager to satisfy the mind of the inquirer, who looks alone to Divine Revelation as the rule of his faith and practice.

Having, as we believe, fairly settled the question, that the one baptism of the text is the one ordinance of baptism, we will next try to see if we can find what is the apostolic form of the ordinance, and, if we can succeed in this, all other forms must be excluded. There is nothing more reasonable than that the Savior, when He gave the command, had a definite form in his mind, and that He would use a specific word to convey the idea intended. The language used in the great commission is, "Baptizing them in, or into, the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost;" and it is agreed by all scholars, that baptize is the Greek word *baptizo*, transferred into the English, and not translated, and that this word is derived from *bapto*, the root of all that family of words, which means to dip, or to immerse only, and that *baptizo*, or baptize, baptism, baptizing, etc., are all derivations of *bapto*, and necessarily contain the original idea, to immerse. On this point, A. Campbell, in his debate with W. L. Rice, gives us, in tabular form the translation of the word *baptizo* from thirty-six different languages, all sustaining immersion, and it is a fact, admitted generally, that there are three Greek words that represent the three forms that are claimed in the action of baptism—*baptizo*, to immerse, *echeo*, to pour, and *rantizo*, to sprinkle, as presented in Lev. 14: 15, 16. "And the priests shall take some of the log of oil, and *echeo* (pour) it into the

palm of his left hand; and the priest shall *baptizo* (dip) his right finger in the oil that is in his left hand, and shall *rantizo* (sprinkle) of the oil with his finger seven times before the Lord."

The idea of immersion for baptism is also clearly sustained by the history of the practice as given in the Scriptures, and performed by divinely-inspired men, as when John was baptizing, "Then went out to him, Jerusalem and all Judea, and all the region round about Jordan, and were baptized of him in Jordan." "Jesus himself being baptized of John, went up straightway out of the water." Matt. 3: 16; Mark 1: 10; John 3: 23. "Philip and the eunuch both went down into the water, and he baptized him, and when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit caught away Philip, and the eunuch went on his way rejoicing." Acts 8: 38, 39 And the slightest intimation is wanting to show that any were baptized without a sufficiency of water for an immersion. This is infallibly safe, supported by unquestionable Scriptural authority, while all other modes are doubtful, being sustained by a speculative theology only. And St. Cyprian, as quoted by Chrystal, page 63, says that "all the testimony which has preceded, points clearly to immersion as the mode, and where it is stated most fully, that immersion was not single, but trine," and we propose to try whether his declaration can be sustained.

In the commission as given by Matthew, "Baptizing them into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost," Matt. 28: 19 (R. V.),—a compound sentence, composed of three simple sentences, each expressive of an action,—the ellipsis being supplied it would read, "Baptizing them into the name of the Father, and baptizing them into the name of the Son, and baptizing them into the name of the Holy Ghost." This certainly favors the

idea of a plurality of actions, and is the only place where the formula of baptism is given. In Mark we have the commission in these words: "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature; he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." In this we have simply the command to baptize, and to understand how it is to be done we refer to Matt. 28: 19, and in the New Testament we have the ordinance spoken of about seventy-five or eighty times, and the formula nowhere given but in Matthew. To this agree the Greek Fathers, who had the commission in their native tongue, and, of course, understood it better than those of other countries.

We quote from A. Campbell, on baptism, page 200, "The facts, then, are, the whole world immersed for thirteen centuries; the east half of Christendom still continues the practice. The Greek portion of the church to this day have never given up the primitive practice."

"It is not the voice of many millions, but the voice of many millions of Greeks, men who knew what the apostles and Greek Fathers had written, who needed no translators to read to them lessons on the primitive practice, or on the meaning of Christ's commission. Some seventy-five, or one hundred millions of such vouchers would outweigh the world." And Mr. Campbell must have known that these vouchers favored trine immersion. We are willing to refer this matter to a committee of Greek scholars and abide by their decision.

We next notice the corresponding testimony of a few out of the many Greek fathers upon this subject. St. Jerome says: "We are thrice dipped in water that the mystery of the trinity may appear to be but one, and, therefore, though we be thrice put under water, to represent the mystery of the trinity, yet it is reputed but one baptism."

Chrysostom says that "Christ delivered to the apostles one baptism in three immersions of the body, when he said to them, "Go teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." Of this kind of testimony we have an abundance, but we present only one more instance, which is found in the Campbell and Rice Debate on "Christian Baptism." Mr. C. says that "grammarians and critics have speculated on the termination *zoo* with a great deal of freedom; some make it the symbol of frequent action, and call verbs so ending frequentatives, etc. But I have a new theory of my own upon this subject."

"My idea is that the word originally meant, not that the dipping should be performed frequently, but that it indicated the rapidity with which the action should be performed." With Mr. Campbell it was necessary to institute a new theory, in the nineteenth century, because the old theory was held (according to his own opinion) by many millions of Greeks, who knew what the apostles and Greek Fathers had written, who needed no translators, nor scholiasts, nor annotators, nor historians, to read to them lessons on the primitive practice, or on the meaning of Christ's commission. This old theory of the frequentative form of the verb *baptizo* did not suit his Unitarian idea, therefore he originated a new one. Single immersion is the outgrowth of Unitarianism.

We quote on this subject from James Chrystal, "Modes of Baptism," page 157: "The verbs *bapto* and *baptizo* both mean ordinarily to immerse, but differ in form, *baptizo* being considered a frequentative, while the other expresses the simple meaning only. And it is well to observe that in the New Testament, first, *bapto*, with its compound *enbapto*, is used six times, but never of baptism; second, *baptizo* is used eighty times, and in every instance of baptism. Now this circumstance of the uniform use of a frequentative form for baptism in preference to one which expresses the simple

meaning to immerse, best agrees with trine immersion. Let us here notice some facts connected with the different translations of the New Testament:

1. We understand that the translators of the Authorized Version of King James were instructed to retain certain words in the original; among these is *baptizo*, which was not translated, but anglicized, and so transferred.

2. In the year 1866, a new translation was published, known as that of the American Bible Union. The rules, as laid down to govern this work, are in part as follows: "The exact meaning of the inspired text, as that text expressed it to those who understood the original Scriptures at the time they were first written, must be given in corresponding words and phrases, so far as they can be found in the English language, with the least possible obscurity and indefiniteness." From this we learn that there are words in the original for which there can be no corresponding word found in the English language. *Baptizo* is one of these words, as is clearly seen in the above references on this question. Immerse is the word used by critics to meet the case, but it fails for want of the frequentative idea, contained in the original. But the authors of this translation, in violation to their own rules, have, in every instance, where the word baptize occurs, substituted immerse. They must have known that it did not "express the meaning as understood by those who understood the original Scriptures as they were first written." Why this is so, cannot be accounted for, unless controlled by those who, practicing single immersion, wanted (like Eunomius of old) to get the frequentative form out of the way.

3. We have also the Revised Version, the work of the European and American committees, published in 1881. In this work the translators have fallen back upon the principle of the Authorized Version, retaining the old ecclesiastical words, such as those for which none could be found in the English language corresponding with the meaning of the

original. Thus, baptize is retained in every instance, the reason for which, we suppose, is, that the translators could not consistently depart from the principle of retaining the idea of the frequentative form contained in the original.

There are persons who seem to find difficulty in harmonizing the text before us,—the “one baptism” with the “doctrine of baptisms” as expressed in Heb. 6, the one in the singular and the other in the plural form. But this difficulty is easily removed when understood correctly, as defined by Dr. Carson, a distinguished English historian and theologian. He says that his philosophy easily accounts for the seeming difference; that “in the epistle to the Ephesians the apostle was speaking of the ordinance, and to the Hebrews the action in performing the ordinance.”

Still another argument in favor of a threefold action in baptism is drawn from the relation we bear to the three persons of the Divinity: First, we learn from the book of nature and Revelation the being and attributes of the Father, as Creator and Governor of the universe, and as such we are brought under obligations of duty to him, and baptized into his name. Second, we learn by Revelation the divine character of the Son, believe on him as our Redeemer and Savior, and being under obligations of duty by the relation we bear to Him, we are baptized into his name. Third, we learn to know the Holy Ghost, and are brought under obligations of duty by the relation we bear to Him as our instructor and sanctifier, and are baptized into his name. And in the performance of this ordinance the candidate is taken down into the water, sinks into the water a sufficient depth, and does not emerge until the remaining part of the body is immersed, once at the naming of each of the three persons of the Divinity.

Thus we have, in Christian baptism, a trinity in unity, and a unity in trinity, one in three, and three in one, one baptism by three immersions, and as to the correctness and validity of this practice we have the united testimony of

Luther and Wesley, with most, if not all, the reformers. I do not believe that any one who is well read in religious literature would risk his reputation by denying this fact; but if there are any that call it in question, we would be thankful if they will answer the following question; Suppose that the Master, in giving the command, did intend that it should be performed by a threefold action, is there any combination of words in the vocabulary of the English, or any other language, that would convey the idea more forcibly than that contained in the commission?

Next we inquire, What is the posture in baptism? Which is best sustained, the forward or backward action, the facts and circumstances all considered? It is understood as being the door into the church, hence the action should be forward. All acts of worship are forward. The act of Moses and the children of Israel, crossing the Red Sea, is called a baptism, and I do not suppose that the thought ever occurred to any one that they did not go forward. Wherever we have the posture in devotion spoken of in the Scriptures, it is a presentation forward, as Joshua and David, kneeling in prayer, and, we may add, Solomon and Daniel, Peter and Paul, and last, but not least, Jesus kneeled, and fell upon his face, in his sufferings, which he called a baptism, which means an overwhelming. But the idea of a backward action has obtained in the minds of some, from what Paul says to the Roman brethren (Rom. 6: 1-4), "Are ye ignorant that all we who were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his *death*? We were buried therefore with him through baptism into death; that like as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we also might walk in newness of life." We notice that the apostle does not say that we were baptized into his grave, but into his *death*, and in dying on the cross Christ bowed his head and gave up the ghost, but if this view is not accepted, it is certainly true that the word bury does not determine the posture. "Bury, to cover out of

sight the body of a deceased person, as in a grave, a tomb; to bury the face in the hands," etc.—*Webster*. Nothing is said about posture. It is certain the Romans burned their dead and buried the ashes, which leaves posture out of the question. Dr. Carson says: "If the Baptists set any value on the manner of putting the body of the baptized person under water, in my opinion they come under censure. Mr. Ewing's whole dissertation on the Jewish manner of burying the distinguished dead, has no bearing on the subject. *Between immersion and burying in any manner there is a likeness*; it is nothing to our purpose to make that likeness dramatic." (Carson's Works, page 153.)

Judson informs us that the English Baptists got their idea of backward action in baptism from the practice of the Pedo-baptists, who, before the introduction of adult baptism in England, in baptizing infants, took them in their hands, and laid them backwards in the water, and they thought, of course, that a candidate for baptism, though a grown-up person, should be treated in the same manner, and laid backward in the water. The consequence has been that all the Baptists in the world, who have sprung from the English Baptists, have practiced the backward action. But in the beginning it was not so. In the apostles' time the administrator placed his right hand upon the head of the candidate and bowed it forward until it was submerged, and rose by its own genuflection. (Judson on Baptism, page 112.)

Martin Luther says, concerning a converted Jewess: "As to the public act of baptism, let her be dressed in a garment usually worn by females in the bath, and be placed in a bathing tub up to her neck in water, then let the Baptist dip her head three times in the water, with the usual words: 'I baptize you in the name of the Father,' etc."

Next we inquire into the design of baptism, and propose mainly to let the Scriptures speak for themselves "Jchn did baptize in the wilderness and preach the baptism

of repentance *for the remission of sins.*" Mark 1: 4. "He that believeth and is *baptized shall be saved.*" Mark 16: 16. "Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ *for the remission of sins*, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." Acts 2: 38. "And they went down into the water, both Philip and the eunuch, and he baptized him, . . . and he went on his way rejoicing." Acts 8: 38, 39. Ananias, sent by the Spirit of God to tell Saul what he must do, says: "And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, *and wash away thy sins*, calling on the name of the Lord." Acts 22: 16. "But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have *obeyed* from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then *made free from sin*, ye became the servants of righteousness. Rom. 6: 17, 18 "When once the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water. The like figure whereunto even *baptism now saves us*, (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God)." 1 Pet. 3: 20, 21.

It is said of John the Baptist, that he preached "the baptism of repentance *for the remission of sins.*" Mark 1: 4. Peter, on the day of Pentecost, said unto those who asked what they should do: "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ *for the remission of sins*, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." Here it is emphatically declared that baptism is "*for the remission of sins*," but those who deny that baptism is a condition of pardon, say that *for* in this connection does not mean in order to, but because their sins were pardoned. Let us examine this question and see if that interpretation can be sustained.

We turn to Matt. 26: 27, 28, and read, "And he took the cup, and gave thanks, saying, Drink ye all of it; for this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many

for the remission of sins." To say his blood was shed because of the remission of sins, would be a palpable absurdity, and cannot be accepted by any intelligent person. And fortunately the Revised Version settles this question beyond the reach of criticism, on this wise: "*For* this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many *unto* the remission of sins." Mark 1: 4. "John came, who baptized in the wilderness, and preached the baptism of repentance *unto* the remission of sins." Acts 2: 38. "And Peter said unto them, Repent ye and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ *unto* the remission of your sins," etc. What is here expressed, is clearly implied in the other Scriptural passages, quoted in this connection, such as "being made free from sin," the eunuch "rejoicing," and Saul "washing away his sins," etc., and ought to settle this question.

But we are aware that the idea obtains in the minds of many that faith alone is all that is needful for the pardon of sins, based upon passages like these: "Jesus Christ, . . . whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins." "Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith, . . . seeing it is one God which shall justify the circumcision by faith, and uncircumcision through faith." Rom. 3: 25, 28, 30. "Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness," 4: 3. "The righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise, The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach," 10: 6, 8. "For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." Verse 10. "The just shall live by faith." Gal. 3: 11. And so many other similar passages; but let it be particularly noted, that not one of them says that the blessing is to be enjoyed by faith only, or faith alone, but faith that worketh by love (5: 6) and this is the love of God, that we keep his command

ments. 1 John 5: 3. Faith, of course, is the leading principle in the economy of grace. "Without faith it is impossible to please God,"—not an abstract faith, but a perfect faith, as declared by the Apostle James, 2: 14, 17, 20, 22, 24, 26. "What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith and hath not works, can faith save him?" The conclusion is that it cannot. "Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone." "But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?" "Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only." Verse 24. "Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, *and by works was faith made perfect.*" Verse 22. "And the Scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God." Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only. For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also. Thus by faith, repentance, and baptism, the first principles of the doctrine of Christ, we are inducted into the divine family; not by our work, but by the work arranged by the Supreme Head of the church, performed by his subjects. He recognizes his own work, and graciously gives the reward.

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